THE

LIFE OF

JOHN METCALF,

COMMONLY CALLED

BLIND JACK

OF

KNARESBROUGH:

With an account of his exploits in hunting, Card-playing, &c. Some curious Particulars relating to the expedition against the Rebels, in 1745, in which he bore a personal share: And, also, a succinct account of his various Contracts, for making Roads, erecting Bridges, and other Undertakings in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire:

WHICH, FOR A SERIES OF YEARS,

BROUGHT HIM INTO PUBLIC NOTICE,

As a most Extraordinary Character.

FOURTH EDITION.

Knaresbrough:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM LANGDALE,

AND SOLD BY HIM

AT KNARESBROUGH AND HARROGATE;

Messrs. Wilson & Sons, York; and Messrs. Mozley & Son, Derby

1836.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

BLIND JACK

DIED APRIL THE 26TH, 1810, IN THE

93RD YEAR OF HIS AGE.

THE

LIFE OF

JOHN METCALF,

COMMONLY CALLED

BLIND JACK

OF

KNARESBROUGH:

With an account of his exploits in hunting, Card-playing, &c. Some curious Particulars relating to the expedition against the Rebels, in 1745, in which he bore a personal share: And, also, a succinct account of his various Contracts, for making Roads, erecting Bridges, and other Undertakings in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire:

WHICH, FOR A SERIES OF YEARS,

BROUGHT HIM INTO PUBLIC NOTICE,

As a most Extraordinary Character.

FOURTH EDITION.

Knaresbrough:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM LANGDALE,

AND SOLD BY HIM

AT KNARESBROUGH AND HARROGATE;

Messrs. Wilson & Sons, York; and Messrs. Mozley & Son, Derby

1836.

Life of John....

Yorkshire Coll.

LIFE OF

JOHN METCALF.

THIS extraordinary man was born at *Knaresbrough*, on the 15th of August, 1717. At the age of four years his parents, who were poor and labouring people, put him to school, where he remained two years. At this period he was seized with the small-pox, which, tho' every possible exertion was made in his behalf, totally deprived him of his sight.

About six months after his recovery, he was able to go from his father's house to the end of the street and return without a guide; this tended considerably to exhilirate his spirits, and soothe him under the dire deprivation under which he had providentially been doomed to suffer. In the course of three years, he was able to find his way to any part of the town, and he had begun to associate with boys of his own age, and go with them to seek bird's nests, and for his share of the eggs and young ones, would climb the trees, whilst his comrades waited at the bottom to direct him to the nests, and receive what he should bring or throw down, and from a repetition of these exercises, he was soon able to climb any tree he could grasp. He could now ramble into the fields and lanes alone, to the distance of two or three miles, and return. His father keeping horses, he learned to ride, and soon became an able horseman. John not being an only child, was, at the age of thirteen, instructed in

music, in which, tho' the cry of a hound or of a harrier was more congenial to his taste than the sound of an instrument, he readily became a proficient.

At this time he kept five hounds of his own, and frequently hunted with a Mr Woodburn, a gentleman of *Knaresbrough*, who kept a pack, and who was always desirous of having Metcalf's company in the chase.

These hounds being seldom kennelled, Metcalf used to take some of them out secretly along with his own, about ten or eleven o'clock at night, (the hares being at that time feeding) which afforded him diversion by the cry of the hounds; but one of them having destroyed a couple of lambs, caused him to discontinue that practice.

When about fourteen years of age, his activity of limbs, and the success with which his exploits were usually attended, led him to imagine that he could, without danger, undertake anything: The following adventure however caused him to alter his opinion:—

A large plum-tree, in the vicinity, having attracted the attention of Metcalf's companions, they informed him of it, and all with one consent, repaired to the place on a Sunday morning to rob it. In these pilfering excursions Metcalf was always appointed to ascend, for the purpose of shaking the tree, he accordingly took his post; but his comrades having been suddenly alarmed, by the appearance of the owner of the tree, quitted the ground with all expedition, Metcalf been thus left alone, readily conceived the cause of their flight, and being inclined to follow his companions, in making his exit, fell headlong into a gravel pit, belonging to Sir Henry Slingsby, and cut a deep wound in his face, without however receiving any other injury

than a stun, which for some time kept him motionless on the ground; his father being rather severe. Metcalf was afraid to go home, lest his wound should lead to a discovery of the adventure.

Shortly after this, having recovered from his dismay, Metcalf and some other of his comrades, in one of their pilfering excursions, having assembled, according to custom, between eleven and twelve o'clock in their nocturnal rendezvous, the church porch, to divide the booty which they had just taken from a neighbouring orchard, one of the depredators, by way of bravado, took hold of a large ring which lifted the latch and called out, "*A tankard of ale here*". A voice from within the church instantly called out very loudly, "*You are at the wrong house.*" This sudden and unexpected response so terrified this company, that they all stood motionless and speechless for some time, but at length Metcalf broke silence and said, 'did you not hear a voice in the church?' Without saying a word more they all ran out of the yard, and immediately held a consultation on the subject, all equally wondering at the *voice*, but none being able satisfactorily to account for it. One supposed that it was the trick of a brother wag, who had put his mouth to the key-hole of the north door; but to this it was unanimously objected, that the reply was too ready and too distinct to have come in that way.—Having recovered themselves a little, they again ventured into those dreary mansions. the church yard, and having come opposite to the church they perceived so great a light within, that they believed the whole edifice to be on fire.—Having again re-entered the enchanted *porch*, a person within lifted the latch, which caused them to disperse terrified and speechless.

The cause which produced this extraordinary excitement in those *wags*, when developed, was, that the sexton had, contrary to custom, been called up in the middle of the night, to dig the grave, in the church, for the interment of an old lady in the neighbourhood, who had been necessarily detained till the arrival of her relations from a distance, and the sensation this produced, fortunately, in future prevented a recurrence of similar acts.

About the year 1731, Metcalf being then 14 years of age, a number of men and boys made a practice of swimming in the river *Nidd*, in which are many depths convenient for that purpose; — Metcalf resolving to learn that art, joined the party, and became so very expert, that his companions did not chuse to come near him in the water, he being in the habit of seizing them, sending them to the bottom, and swimming over them, by way of diversion.

About this time two men were drowned in those deeps, and Metcalf was sent for to dive for the bodies, and at the fourth diving, succeeding in bringing up one, a lifeless corpse; who when raised to the surface, was carried on shore by other swimmers, but the other body was not, at that time found.

The river *Nidd* is subject to frequent floods, and in the deep places, there are eddies, or some other causes of attraction, which will draw to the bottom any substance, however light, within their sphere of attraction. Large pieces of timber are often seen carried down, and when passing over the deep places, are stopped for the space of a moment, and then sunk; on these occasions, Metcalf would dive for them, and with the greatest ease fix ropes to the wood, which was then drawn up by some persons stationed on the banks.

In the year 1732, Mr. John Barker, a friend of Metcalf's, who kept an inn at the west end of the High-bridge, being a linen manufacturer, and bleacher of his own yarn, had carried, at one time two packs of yarn to the river to wash, a sudden flood occasioned by a heavy rain in the neighbourhood, swept them away, and drove them through the arches of the bridge, which stands on a rock. A little below was a sheet of still water, supposed to be 21 feet in depth; as soon as the yarn came to this, it sunk, except a little which caught the edge of the rock in going down. Metcalf calling at Barker's house a few days after the accident, found him lamenting his loss, told him he hoped to recover the yarn, but Barker smiled at the supposed absurdity of the proposal; finding, however, that he was resolved on trial, consented. Metcalf then ordered some cart ropes to be procured, and fixing a hook at one end, the other being held by some persons on the High-bridge, he descended, and hooked as much of the yarn as he could at one time, gave orders for drawing up, in this way, the whole was recovered with little damage.

Soon after this, Metcalf being at the house of one Green, an inn-keeper at *Scriven*, two persons then present, had a dispute, concerning some sheep which one of them had put into the pinfold. The owner of the sheep appeared to be ill treated by the other party, who wished to take an unfair advantage, and Metcalf perceiving they were not likely to agree about the damages, bade them good night, saying he was goingto *Knaresbrough*, and it being about midnight, he resolved to do the injured party a little friendly business before he went home, and immediately repaired to the fold, climbed over the wall and, though the difficulty increased as the number grew less, he succeeded in lifting them all

over the wall, one by one, and this speedily put an end to the altercation.

In the morning, the pinfold being found untenanted, and the door locked, various conjectures passed as to the rogue or rogues who had liberated the sheep, but Metcalf happily passed unsuspected, and silently enjoyed the joke.

He continued to practice on the *violin*, till he could play country dances, but still retained his fondness for hunting, and also began to keep game-cocks.

Whenever he went to a cock-pit, he always placed himself on the lowest seat, near some friend who was a judge, who by certain motions assisted him in betting and waging.

At *Bilton*, there was a rookery, which many had attempted to rob, but which had always been prevented by the vigilence of the owner; Metcalf however, determined to make the attempt, and having sent one of his companions to ascertain the position of the nests, and having learnt their relative situations, they all set out in the middle of the night, and brought seven dozen and a half, leaving the *heads* under the trees.

The owner having found the *heads*, offered a reward of two guineas on conviction of the offender or offenders, but the secret was, for a long time, concealed.

A person at *Knaresbrough*, having occasion to go to Boroughbridge-fair, a distance of about seven miles, and having left something behind, sent his son for it.--Metcalf being about the same age as this boy, chose to accompany him;—when they got to the place, the boy missed the key, which he had lost from his pocket by the way, and being afraid to return, he consulted Metcalf how they should proceed; Metcalf was for entering the

house at all events; and not being able to procure a ladder, he got a pole, which reached to the thatch, and having borrowed a rope and a stick, he climbed up the pole, and then ascended the chimney;—he placed the stick across, fastened the rope to it, and attempted to descend, but finding the flue too narrow, he threw off his cloathes, and laying them on the ridge of the house, made a second attempt, and got down by the assistance of the rope; he then opened the door for his companion; while they were in the house, there was a heavy thunder shower, to which Metcalf's clothes were exposed; he attempted to get up again, to fetch them, but the pole by which he had ascended was now so wet, that he could not climb by it, he was therefore obliged to wait until it dried, when he recovered his cloathes: *This was considered by all who heard of it, as a most extraordinary performance by one in his situation, as well as a great act of friendship.*

In the year 1732, Metcalf was invited to *Harrogate*, to succeed as fiddler, an old man of the name of Morrison, who had played there for 70 years, who being borne down by the weight of 100 years, was not able to follow his occupation; the old man died in the 102nd year of his age, and played the very year in which he died. Metcalf was well received by the nobility and gentry, who employed no other fiddler, except a boy whom he hired as an assistant. This year they began to build a long-room at the Queen's Head.

Metcalf having now bought a horse, often ran him for small plates. He still continued the barbarous practice of cock-fighting, often hunted, and sometimes went a coursing, and in the evenings, played at the assemblies.

About this time there was a long room built at the Green Dragon, at *Harrogate*; more music

being then wanted, he engaged one Midgeley, (*one of the Leeds waits*) and his son as assistants. Midgeley, Sen. being a good performer, was taken into partnership gratis; but the son, and Metcalf's former assistant paid 5 pounds each, as premium; this was done with the approbation of all the Innkeepers, who wished to keep Metcalf at the head of the band.

In the year 1735, Francis Barlow, Esquire, of *Middlethorpe*, near *York*, who kept a pack of beagles, was at *Harrogate*, and liking Metcalf, gave him an invitation to spend the winter at *Middlethorpe*, desiring him to bring his horse with him. The invitation was gladly accepted, and he went out with Mr. Barlow's hounds twice a week. Having completed a visit of six months at *Middlethorpe*, he had learned to walk and ride very readily through most of the streets in *York;* and as he was riding past the George-inn, in Coney-street, Standish, the landlord, stopped him, calling out, "What haste?" Metcalf told him he was for *Knaresbrough* that night; the landlord replied, that there was a gentleman in the house who wanted *a guide to Harrogate;* adding, "I know you can do that as well as any one!"—"So I can," said he, but you must not let him know that I am blind, for perhaps he will be afraid to trust me:" "I shall manage that," replied Standish, so going in, he informed the gentleman he had procured him a safe guide; pleased at this, the gentleman requested Metcalf to come in and take a glass; this (for an obvious reason) the landlord objected to, on the part of Metcalf, but recommended some wine at the door; during the drinking of which, the stranger got ready, and they set off, Metcalf taking the lead; as they were turning Ousegate-corner, a voice hallowed out—"*Squire Barlow's blind hunts-*

man?"—But, the gentleman not knowing the meaning of this, they rode briskly up Micklegate, through the bar, turned the corner at Holgate, and through *Poppleton-field*, on to *Hessay-moor*, and so proceeded forward, going over *Skip-bridge;* (at this time the turnpike was not made between *York* and *Harrogate*.)

On the north west of *Kirk-Hammerton-moor*, the road to *Knaresbrough*, joined the main road which leads to *Boroughbridge*, by a sudden turn to the left, but Metcalf cleared that without any difficulty; when they came to *Allerton-Mauleverer*, the stranger asked whose great house that was on the right, and was immediately informed by Metcalf; a little further on, the road is crossed by the one from *Wetherby* to *Boroughbridge*, and proceeds along by the high brick-wall of *Allerton-park;* there was a road leading out of the park, opposite to the gate upon the *Knaresbrough* road, which Metcalf was afraid of missing; but the wind being from the east, and he perceiving a blast coming through the park gate, he readily turned his horse to the opposite gate which leads to *Knaresbrough;* reaching out his hand to open it he felt the heel, as it is called; he believed the gate had been changed in the hanging part, as he had not been there for seven months before; and, backing his horse, exclaimed, "Confound thee! thou always goest to the gate's heel, instead of the head!" The gentleman observed to him that his horse seemed awkward, and that his own mare was good at coming up to a gate; whereupon Metcalf permitted him to perform this office. Darkness (which had now come on) being no obstruction to him, he briskly led the way, resolved that his companion should not again see his face till they got to *Harrogate;* as they were going through *Knaresbrough*, the gen-

tleman proposed a glass of wine, which Metcalf refused, alleging that the horses were hot, and that being near their journey's end, it was not worth while to stop:—Forward they went, and presently some one cried out, "*That's Blind Jack!*"—This assertion, however was contradicted by another person, who could not clearly identify him; and by this means the stranger was kept in the *dark* as effectually as his guide. They then proceeded over the High-bridge, and up the forest lane, and entering the forest, about a mile from *Knaresbrough*, they had to pass along a narrow causeway, which reached about one third of the way to *Harrogate;* the forest at that time not being inclosed, and no turnpike being made; Metcalf still kept the lead; when they had gone a little way up the forest, the gentleman saw a light, he asked what place it was! There were some rocks upon the forest, called *Hookston-craggs*, and near to these the ground was low and swampy in some places, close by which lay the *Leeds road*; about this part were frequently seen in the night, vapours, commonly called Will o'-the-wisp; Metcalf took it for granted that his companion had seen one of these, but for good reasons, declined asking him whereabouts the light was; and to divert his attention from that object, asked him, "Do you not see two lights, one to the right, the other to the left?" "No," replied the gentleman, "I see but one to the right."—"Well then Sir," said Metcalf, "that is *Harrogate:*" There were then many tracks, but Metcalf made choice of that nearest the fence: by the side of this path, which is very near *Harrogate*, some larches were planted, and stepping stones laid for the convenience of foot passengers, Metcalf got upon this stony path, and the gentleman's horse

following, got one of his hind feet jammed between two of the stones; when his horse was freed, he asked, "Is there no other road?" "Yes," replied Metcalf, "there is another, but it is a mile about," knowing at the same time that there was a dirty cart-way just at hand, but to which on some account he preferred this rugged path.

Arrived at their journey's end, they stopped at the house now called the Granby, but found that the hostler had gone to bed; Metcalf being very well acquainted with the place, led both the horses into the stable, and the hostler soon after appearing, he delivered them to his care, and went into the house to inquire after his fellow-traveller, whom he found comfortably seated over a tankard of negus, in which he pledged his guide; Metcalf took it at him the first time very completely, but when attempting to take it the second time, something having interfered in his mind, he reached out his hand wide of the mark, however he soon found it and drank, and going out again, left to the landlord the opportunity of explaining to his companion what he was not yet sensible of.

"I think landlord," said the gentleman, "my guide must have drank a great deal of spirits since we came here"—"Why my good sir do you think so?"—"Well, I judge so from the appearance of his *eyes!*"—*Eyes!* bless you sir," rejoined the landlord, "do you not know that he is BLIND?" "What do you mean by that?"—"I mean, sir, that *he cannot see!*"--"BLIND! are you in earnest?" "Yes sir, as blind as a stone, by heaven!"—"Well landlord," said the gentleman, "this is too much, call him in," Metcalf entered, "My friend are you really blind?"—"Yes sir, I lost my sight when six years old;"—"Had I known that, I would not

have ventured with you for a hundred pounds;"—"And I sir," said Metcalf, "would not have lost my way for a thousand." This conversation ended; Metcalf was rewarded by a present of two guineas, besides a plentiful entertainment the next day, at the cost of this gentleman.

1736. The *Harrogate* season now commencing, Metcalf again resumed his occupation, and being of a jocular and comic turn, was so well received at all the inns, that he obtained free quarters for himself and horse.

The Green Dragon at that place, was kept by a Mr. Body, who had two nephews with him, and when the hunting season drew near its close, these with some other young men, expressed a desire for a day's sport; and knowing that Mr. Woodburn, the master of the *Knaresbrough-pack of hounds*, had often lent them to Metcalf, they doubted not of the success of *his* application; being however, unprovided with hunters, they were obliged to defer the day for near a fortnight, their horses being out of condition—Metcalf had no doubt but Mr. Woodburn would grant him this favour, though he had not as yet acquainted him with it.

But on the evening before the appointed day, Metcalf went, flushed with hope of Mr Woodburn's complying with his request respecting the loan of the pack for the next day; but this was a favour out of his power to grant, having already engaged to meet Mr. Trappes, with the hounds, next morning, upon *Scotton-moor*, for the purpose of entering some young fox-hounds;—chagrined at this, Metcalf debated with himself whether the disappointment should fall on Mr Woodburn's friends or his own; determined that it should not be the lot of the latter, he arose the next morning before day-break, and crossed the High-bridge, near which he had

the joint echoes of the *old Castle and Belmond-wood:* He had brought with him an extraordinary good hound of his own, and taking him by the ears made him give mouth very loudly, himself giving some halloos at the same time: This devise had so good an effect, that in a few minutes he had nine couple about him, as the hounds were kept by various people about the shambles, &c. and were suffered to lay unkennelled:—Mounting his horse, away he rode with the dogs to *Harrogate*, where he met his friends ready mounted and in high spirits, some of them proposed to go to *Bilton-wood*, near *Knaresbrough*, but this was opposed by Metcalf who preferred the moor; in fact he was apprehensive of being followed by Mr. Woodburn, and wished to be further from *Knaresbrough* on that account.

Pursuant to this advice, they drew the moor at the distance of five miles, where they started a hare, killed her after a fine chase, and immediately put up another: Just at this moment came up Mr. Woodburn foaming with anger, swearing most terribly, and threatening to send Metcalf to the devil, or at least to the house of correction; and his passion rising to the utmost, rode up with an intention to horse-whip him, which Metcalf prevented, by galloping out of his reach; Mr. Woodburn then endeavoured to call off his hounds, but Metcalf knowing the fleetness of his own horse, ventured within speaking, though not within *whipping* distance of him, and begged that he would permit the dogs to finish the chase, alleging that it would spoil them to take them off, being confident they would (as they actually did) kill in a very short time:—Metcalf soon found that Mr. Woodburn's anger had begun to abate, and going nearer to him, pleaded

in excuse a misunderstanding of his plan, which he said he thought had been fixed for the day after: The apology succeeded with this good natured gentleman, who giving the hare to Metcalf, desired he would accompany him to *Scotton-moor*, whither, though late, he would go, rather than wholly disappoint Mr. Trappes:—The reader, by this time, knows enough of Metcalf to believe he was not averse to this proposal, so leaving the hares with his comrades, and engaging to be with them in the evening, he joined his old associate:—The day being advanced, Metcalf objected to the circuitous way of *Knaresbrough*, as it was two miles round by *Harrogate-bridge*, proposing to cross the river *Nidd*, *at Holm-bottom*, and Mr. Woodburn not being acquainted with the ford, he again undertook the office of guide, and leading the way, they soon arrived at *Scotton-moor*, where Mr. Trappes and his company had waited for them two hours. Mr. Woodburn explained the cause of the delay, and being now able to participate in the joke, the affair ended very agreeably.

Metcalf staid with this company until three in the afternoon, and then set off for *Harrogate*, crossing the river. He had not tasted food that day, but when he got to his friends, he found them preparing the brace of hares, with many other good things for the supper.

In summer he would often play at bowls, making the following conditions with his antagonist, viz. to receive the odds of a bowl extra, for the deficiency of an eye, by these terms he had three for the other's one. He took care to place a friend and confident at the jack, and another about midway, and those keeping up a constant discourse with him, which enabled him by their voices to judge of the distance; the degree of bias he could

always ascertain by feeling; and curious as it may seem, was very frequently the winner.

Cards too, began to engage his attention, all of which he could soon unassisted distinguish; and many were the persons of rank, who from curiosity played with him, but he generally winned the majority of the games.

But the achievements already enumerated, were far from bounding either his ambition or capacity; he now aspired to the acquaintance of jockies of a higher class than he had hitherto known, and to this end frequented the races at *York*, and many other places; when he always found the better kind of persons inclined to lend him their skill in making his bets, &c. impressed as they no doubt were, with sympathy for his situation, and surprise at his odd propensity; he commonly rode to the race ground amongst the crowd, and kept in memory both the winning and losing horses.

Being much in the habit of visiting *York*, in the winter time, a whim would often take him to call for his horse at bed-time, and set out for *Knaresbrough*, regardless of the badness of the roads and weather, and of all remonstrance from his friends; yet the hand of providence always conducted him in safety.—It was common for him to go from *Skipton*, over the forest moor to *Knaresbrough* alone, but if he had company, and it was night, he was of course the foremost.

About the year 1738, Metcalf having increased his stud, and being aware of the docility of that noble animal the horse, he so tutored his own, that whenever he called them by their respective names, they would immediately answer him by neighing; this was chiefly accomplished by some discipline at the time of feeding: he could however without the

help of those responses select his own horses out of any number.

Having matched one of his horses to run 3 miles for a wager of some note, and the parties agreeing to ride each his own, they set up posts at certain distances on the forest, including a circle of one mile, having of course, three rounds to go: Great odds were laid against Metcalf, upon the supposition of his inability to keep the course; bnt what did his ingenuity suggest in this dilemma? or rather what did it anticipate: He procured four dinner bells from the different inns, with what others he could borrow; and placing a man with a bell to each post, he was enabled by the ringing, to turn, and fully availing himself of the superior fleetness of his horse came in winner, amidst the plaudits and exultations of the multitude, except those only who had betted against him.

A gentleman of the name of Skelton then came up, and proposed to Metcalf a small wager, that he could not gallop a horse of his 50 yards, and stop him within 200; this horse was a notorious runaway, and had baffled the efforts of the best and strongest riders to hold him: Metcalf accepted the wager, upon condition that he might choose his ground; but Skelton objected to there being either hedge or wall in the distance; Metcalf ever ready at any thing that was likely to produce a joke, agreed, the stakes were deposited; and knowing that there was a large bog near the Old Spaw, at *Harrogate*, he mounted at about the distance of 150 yards from it; having observed the wind, and placed a person who was to sing a song for the guidance of sound, he set off at full gallop towards the bog, and soon fixed the horse saddle skirt deep in the mire; he then floundered through the dirt as well as he was able, till he gained a firm footing,

when he demanded his wager, which was allotted him by general suffrage: It was with the greatest difficulty, however, that the horse could be extricated;--That Metcalf was so well acquainted with the place was owing to his having, about three weeks before relieved a stranger who had got fast in it in the night, and whose cries had attracted him.

It was now no unusual thing with him to buy horses with a view to sell them again; happening to meet with a man who had left the place of huntsman to a pack of subscription hounds, kept by Sir John Kaye, Mr. Hawkesworth and others, who had a horse to sell, Metcalf enquired his price, at the same time requesting permission to ride him a little way; having trotted the horse a mile or two he returned, telling the owner that the *eyes* of his nag would soon fail; the man however stood firm to his demand of 25 guineas for the horse, alleging that he was beautifully moulded, only six years old, and his action good; Metcalf then followed the man into the stable, and desired him to lay his hand upon the eyes of his horse, to feel their uncommon heat, asking him at the same time, how he could in conscience demand so great a price for a horse that was going blind, the treaty ended with Metcalf's purchasing the horse, bridle and saddle, for £14.

A few days after, as he was riding on his new purchase, he ran against a sign post on the common near the toy shop, and nearly threw it down; not discouraged by this, he set off for *Ripon*, to play at an assembly, and passing by a place at *Harrogate* called the *World's End*, he overtook a man going the *Ripon-road;* with him Metcalf bet a wager of six-penny-worth of liquor that he would get first to an ale house at some distance; the ground being rough, Metcalf's horse soon fell, and lay for a while on the thigh of his master, when making an effort

to rise, he cut Metcalf's face with one of his fore-shoes; the Reverend Mr. Richardson coming up at this moment, and expressing his concern for the accident, Metcalf told him that nothing had hurt him, but the *cowardice of his horse*, who had *struck him whilst he was down;* his instrument however, suffered so materially, that he was obliged to borrow one to perform on for the night at *Ripon*, to which place he got without further accident, the assembly being over, he set off to return to *Harrogate*, and arrived there about three in the morning.

He now thought it was time to dispose of his fine horse, whose eyes began to discharge much; after applying the usual remedies of alum blown into the eyes, rowelling in different parts, &c. he found him in marketable condition, and knowing that there would soon be a great show of horses without *Micklegate-bar*, at *York*, he resolved to take the chance of that mart, and setting out the night before put up at the Swan, in Micklegate; the next morning when the show began, Metcalf's nag attracted the notice of one Carter, a very extensive dealer, who asking the price, was told 22 guineas; Carter then inquired if he was sound, and received for answer, 'I never knew him lame, but I shall trot him on this pavement, and if there be any ailment of that kind, it will soon appear with my weight.' The dealer bade him 16 guineas, and a little after 17; which Metcalf, for well known reasons, was glad to receive.

In the year 1738, Metcalf attained the age of 21 years, and the height of six feet one inch and a half, and was remarkably robust withal.

Being desirous of getting a little fish, he once unassisted, drew a net of 80 yards length, in the deepest parts of the river *Wharfe*, for three hours together; at one time he held the lines in his mouth, being obliged to swim.

Meeting with some company, amongst whom was one of a boastful turn, Metcalf proposed to go against him from *Harrogate to Knaresbrough-cross*, provided he would take the way that Metcalf should choose; to this the other agreed, believing that he could easily keep pace with Metcalf, till he should arrive within sight of the cross, and that he could push forward and beat him; but when they got within half a mile of the town, Metcalf quitted the road which leads over the *High-bridge*, and knowing that his antagonist could not swim, made for a deep part of the river, above the bridge, and divesting himself of his upper drapery, swam across, at the same time calling out jeeringly to his adversary, 'that he hoped for the pleasure of his company up to the cross,' the other not liking to commit himself to the water, gave up the wager.

About this time Dr. Chambers, of *Ripon*, had a well made horse, which he used to hunt, but finding that he had become a great stumbler, he exchanged him with a dealer, who took him to *Harrogate*, and meeting with Metcalf, told him he had an excellent hunter to sell at a low price.—Metcalf desired to try how the horse leaped, and the owner agreeing, he mounted him, and found that he could leap over any wall or fence the height of himself, when saddled; the bargain was soon struck, and this happening at the Queen's Head, several gentlemen who were witnesses of the horse's performance, invited Metcalf to accompany them two days after to *Belmond-wood*, where a pack of hounds were about to throw off.

These hounds were the joint property of Francis Trappes, Esq. and his brother of *Nidd*, *near Ripley*; a pack superior to this was not to be found in the kingdom.

The wished for day arrived, Metcalt attended the

gentlemen, and the hounds were not long in finding; the fox took away to *Plumpton-rocks*, but finding all secure there, he made for *Stockeld-wood*, and found matters in the same state as at *Plumpton*--He had then run about six miles—He came back and crossed the river *Nidd*, near the *Old Abbey*, and went on the east side of *Knaresbrough* to a place called *Coney-Garths*, (where there are earths) *near Scriven*, Metcalf's horse carried him nobly, pulling hard, and requiring proportionate resistance: The wind being high, Metcalf lost his hat, but would not stop to recover it; and coming to *Thistle-hill*, *near Knaresbrough*, he resolved to cross the river at the *Abbey-mill*, having often before gone that way on foot, over the damstones; when he got to the dam, he attended to the noise of the fall as a guide, and ranging his horse in a line with the stones, dashed forward for some part of the way, but the stones being slippery with a kind of moss, the horse stumbled, but recovered this, and a second blunder; the third time, however, floundering completely, away went horse and rider into the dam; Metcalf had presence of mind to disengage his feet from the stirrups, during the descent, but both the horse and himself were immersed over head in the water. he then quitted his seat, and made for the opposite side, the horse following him, having secured his nag, he laid himself down on his back, and held up his heels to let the water run out of his boots; which being done, he quickly remounted, and went up a narrow lane, which leads to the road betwixt *Knaresbrough and Wetherby;* then through some lanes on the north-east side *of Knaresbrough;* and crossing the *Boroughbridge-road*, he got to *Coney-Garths*, where he found that the whipper-in only had arrived before him.

Here the *fox* had earthed as was expected, and

the other horsemen who had gone over the *Low-bridge* and through the town, after some time, came up—They were very much surprised at finding Metcalf there, and attributed the soaked condition *of* himself and horse to profuse sweating; nor were they undeceived till, giving up the *fox*, they got to *Scriven*.

Soon after this time, a circumstance happened which obliged John to take a *tour to Scarbrough*: As he was walking one day on the sands with a friend, he resolved to take a swim into the sea; his companion agreeing to give him a hallow when he should think he had gone far enough outward: but the other not making a sufficient allowance for the noise of the sea, suffered him to go out of hearing before he shouted, and Metcalf continued swimming until he got out of sight of his friend, who now expected to see him no more; at length he began to reflect, that should he proceed on to *Holland*, he had nothing in his *pocket* to make him welcome, so he turned on his back to rest himself, his ears being covered with water, but after he had sufficiently rested, he turned himself again, and removing the hair of his head from his ears, began to listen, he thought he heard the breakers beating against the pier which defends the *Spaw*, finding by the noise that he was at a great distance, he increased his efforts, and happening to be right, he landed in safety and relieved his friend from a very painful situation.

Having an aunt at *Whitby, near the Alum-works*, he went there, left his horse, and got on board an *Alum-ship*, bound for *London*; he arrived at the metropolis, stayed there only a few weeks, played on the violin, and did very well, but meeting so many acquaintances did not think himself safe. After some time, meeting

with a vessel, he returned again to *Whitby*; and having a numerous acquaintance at *Newcastle*, by their frequent coming to *Harrogate*, he went there and was kindly received by many families, amongst the rest was one counseller Grey, an eminent man in the law, who invited Metcalf to dine with him every day during his visit, which was about a month; one day going as usual, he said to Metcalf, 'you and I are nearly of a size,' and brought down a suit of clothes, and said, I think these will fit you, and are at your service if you please to accept of them, which surprised him very much, and he returned him many thanks for this token of his favour; then going into another room he tryed them on, and found them little worse for wear; he then left *Newcastle*, and went to *Sunderland*, where he staid a little while among the sailors, then proceeded to *Whitby*, to his aunt's, with whom he had left his horse, as she was in tolerable circumstances—after that he determined to come to *Knaresbrough*, and set off in the forenoon, intending to call at Mr, Varley's, as he had been there half a year a little before; he had company over the *moor* to *Pickering*, as he had never been that road; at *Pickering* his company left him, but proposed first a pint of ale at parting; Metcalf said, "I must have change for a guinea," put his hand into his pocket, but to his surprise no guinea could he found, for by some misfortune it was gone, which gave him great concern.

He then went to *Malton*, which was six miles, though he had never been that road before, but had been at *Malton*—he got safe there, and continued the road for *York*; a little from *Malton*, his horse began to tire, at a place called *Crome-beck*, which sometimes comes suddenly down, where a

man a little time before had been drowned, it happened to be a very rainy time, and there being no bridge then, about the year 1739, (though they have got one since) his horse being weak, he took hold of the bridle rein, and would lead him through; not being afraid of the water himself, but was fearful of drowning his horse, having got safe through, he pursued his journey, but his horse being weak, he was under the necessity of leading him part of the road, and walking sometimes up to the boots' tops in dirt, especially at a place near *Lobster-house.*

He soon came to a *common* called *Stockton-moor*, about four or five miles from *York*, where there was neither turnpike nor paved causeway over it at that time, and he had got out of any track, and was in great difficulty, but fortunately he heard a cock crow, which was in *Stockton*, he endeavoured to find the place from whence he had heard the cock, and got safe into *Stockton-town ;* from this place there was a paved causeway all the way to *York*, upon which he went, then thought himself safe, though he had never experienced such a fatiguing journey in all his life.

He then came down Goodram-gate, crossed Peter-gate end, down the Shambles, and through the Pavement, over *Ouse-bridge*, turned into Skeldergate, and through the Postern, it being in the dead of night, but he wanted no direction, knowing all the places so well, then coming to *Middlethorpe*, the gates were fast—they were made of planks with iron spikes at the top, which made it difficult to climb over, but necessity being the mother of invention, he called forth her aid—Metcalf took the bridle from his horse's head, doubled the rein, and throwing it over one of the

spikes of the gate, by this means, and by the help of the corner of a wall that joined the gate, he got up and climbed over, but when he was at the top, his situation was perilous, for if his foot had slipped he would have fallen on the spikes, which might have been fatal; he then opened the gates and led his horse through, and greatly surprised some women by his appearance, who happened to be up washing; when day-light appeared, the family received him very kindly; he staid about three weeks, and then returned to *Knaresbrough* where he met with a north country-man who played on the small pipes, and frequented the houses of many gentlemen in town; he had been in *London* different times, and he advised Metcalf to take a trip with him, which he did.

By this man Metcalf found out several who were in the habit of visiting *Harrogate*, and amongst others, Colonel Liddell, who resided in *King-street, Covent Garden*, and who gave him a general invitation to his house; the Colonel, was a *Member of Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed*, and lived at *Ravensworth Castle, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne;* and on his return from *London* to the north, which generally happened in the month of May, he stopped three weeks at *Harrogate*, for a number of years successively.

When the winter was over, Metcalf thought he must take a *ramble out of London*; accordingly he set out through *Kensington, Hammersmith, Colnbrook, Maidenhead, and Reading, in Berkshire;* and returned by *Windsor and Hampton-court to London*, in the beginning of May; in his absence, Colonel Liddell had sent to his lodgings, to let him know that he was going to *Harrogate*, and that if agreeable to him, he might go down either behind his coach, or on the top; Metcalf, on

his return, waited upon the Colonel, and thanked him, but declined his kind offer, observing that he could with great ease walk as far in a day, as he would choose to travel; the next day at noon, the Colonel and his suit, consisting of 16 servants, on horseback, set off, Metcalf started about an hour before them, they were to go by way of *Bugden*, and he proceeded on to *Barnet;* a little way from *Barnet, the Bugden and St. Albans roads part*, and he had taken the latter; however he made good the destined place for sleeping, which was *Welling*, and arrived a little before the Colonel, who was surprised at his performance; Metcalf set off again the next morning before his friends, and coming to *Biggleswade*, found the road was crossed with water, there being no bidge at that time; he made a circuitous cast, but found no other way, except a foot-path, which he was dubious of trusting; a person coming up, asked "what road are you for?"—He answered "*for Bugden*," "You have had some liquor this morning I suppose," "Yes," replied Metcalf, although he had tasted none that day; the stranger then bid him follow, and he would direct him into the highway; soon after they came to some sluces with planks laid across, and Metcalf followed by the sound of his guide's feet; then to a gate on one side of the turnpike, which being locked, he was told to climb over; Metcalf was struck with the kind attention of his conductor, and taking two-pence from his pocket, said "Here good fellow, take that and get thee a pint of beer;" but the other declined it, saying he was welcome; Metcalf, however, pressing the reward upon him, was asked, "Can you see very well?"—"Not remarkably well," he replied: "My friend," said the stranger, "I do not mean to *tythe you*—I am

rector of this parish, and so GOD bless you, and I wish you a good journey;" Metcalf set forward with the parson's benediction, aud stopped every night with the Colonel; on coming to *Wetherby*, he arrived at the inn before him as nsual, and told the landlord of his approach, who asked him by what means he had become acquainted with that, and was informed by him how he had preceded the Colonel the whole week, this being saturday, and they had left town on Monday noon; the Colonel arriving, ordered Metcalf into his room, and proposed halting till Monday, but Metcalf replied, 'with your leave, Sir. I shall go to *Harrogate tonight* and meet you there on Monday;' so he set off for *Knaresbrough that night*, and meeting the Colonel at *Harrogate* on Monday, had much agreeable conversation about their journey.

Metcalf became now in great request as a performer at the *Ripon-Assemblies*, which was resorted to by many families of distinction, such as *Sir Walter Blacket of Newby, Sir John Wray, Sir B. Graham, — Rhodes, Esq. — Aislaby, Esq. of Studley, and many others*; when he played alone, it was usual with him after the assembly, to set off *for Harrogate, or Knaresbrough;* but when he had an assistant, he remained all night at *Ripon*, to keep him company, his partner being afraid to ride in the dark.

Finding himself worth £15, (a larger sum than he ever had before) and a main of cocks being made in the neighbourhood, he became a party, and lost two-thirds of his whole fortune; the remaining £5 he laid out on a horse, which was to run at *York* a few days after, and had the good fortune to win the last wager.

Metcalf still followed cocking, racing, &c. but continued to play at the assemblies, which pinched

him for a time, but like all persons who lose money by gaming, still wanted to get it the same way as it went.

Being informed that his old acquaintance, Miss Benson of the *Royal-Oak*, was going to be married, he hastened to *Harrogate*, and passing by the house, he heard himself loudly accosted in these words--"One wants to speak with you!" he turned immediately to the stables of the Oak, and to his joyful surprise, found there his favourite, who had sent her mother's maid to call him: after some conversation, the lady consented to an elopement, but their immediate concern was to fix on some plan, as Miss Benson was apprehensive of being missed by her friends;—Jack ever prompt at an expedient, desired that she would that night, *place a lighted candle* in one of the windows of the old house, as soon as the coast was clear, and herself ready to set off, which will doubtless appear to the reader a very *extraordinary signal to a blind man*, but he had conceived measures for carrying the projected elopement into effect by the assistance of a third person; this being approved of, she went into the house, and in a short time was followed by Metcalf, who was warmly received by the supposed bridegroom and company, the tankard went briskly round, "*Success to the intended couple!*" in which toast it may be readily believed, Metcalf joined them most cordially.

Having staid till it was near dark, he thought it time for putting business into a proper train; going then to a public house, known by the name of the *World's End*, he inquired for the hostler, whom he knew to be a steady fellow, and after obtaining from this man a promise either to serve him in an affair of moment in which he was engaged, or keep

the secret, he related the particulars of his assignation, and the intended elopement to forward which, he desired him to let them have his master's mare, which he knew would carry double; this being agreed on, he requested the further service of meeting him at *Ross' Library*, (now Langdale's, near the Granby) at 10 o'clock; a whistle was to be given by the first who got there, as a signal;—they met pretty punctually, and Metcalf asked if he *saw a star*, meaning the light before mentioned, he said he did not, and staying about half an hour, and the light not appearing, it caused some little doubt in Metcalf's mind, respecting the affair, in a little time the *star* was in the place appointed: they then drew towards the house where their business laid, and left the horses at a little distance from the house, not choosing to venture into the court-yard, it being paved: on the door being opened by the lady, he asked her if she was ready, to which she replied in the affirmative; he advised her however, to pack up a gown or two, as she probably might not see her mother again for some time, (she having 19 or 20 gowns at that time) and having a new pillion and cloth, Metcalf asked her for it; "O dear!" said she, "it is in the other house, but we must have it:" she then went to the window and called up her sister who let her in: the pillion and cloth were in the room where the supposed bridegroom slept, and on seeing her enter, said. "I'll take that and brush it, that it may be ready in the morning;"—"That's well thought on my dear," said he; she then came down and all three went to the horses; Metcalf mounted her behind his friend, then got upon his own horse, and away they went, at that time it was not a matter of so much difficulty to get married, as it is at present, and they with only the trouble of riding twelve miles, and at a small expence, were united.

Metcalf left his bride on his return, at a friend's house, within five miles of *Harrogate*, and came to the Queen's Head, to perform the usual service of playing during the breakfast half hour; in the mean time, Mrs. Benson and her other daughter began to prepare for breakfast; and observing that Dolly lay very long in bed, her mother desired that she might be called; but her usual bed-fellow declaring that she had not slept with her, she was ordered to seek her in someof the other rooms; this was done but in vain; they then took it for granted that she had taken a ride with Mr. Dickenson, the intended bridegroom, but he returning, could give no account of her; all her friends now began to be very seriously alarmed; and a person from the Oak came and informed Metcalf of all that had happened there that morning.

This narrative, a part of which was no news to him, who after a little more discourse, put an end to, by saying, "*I married her since you saw me last night!*" thinking it his duty to conciliate if possible, those whom he had offended, he employed thesoftest phrases he was master of on the occasion; he begged pardon (though their son) of Mr. and Mrs. Benson, as the distance was great in circumstances, whom he could not presume to call father and mother, and wished them to believe that the warmth of his passion for their daughter, with the despair of obtaining their consent, had led him to the measures he had taken, and that he would make them the best amends in his power, by the affectionate conduct he would observe to his wife.

The messenger left Metcalf. and reported this declaration to her parents, who appeared to be as much hurt at it, as they probably would have been at the sight of their house in flames; and in the height of passion, declared they would put him to death if they met with him.

Metcalf took a small house at *Knaresbrough*; it now became a matter of wonder that she should have preferred a blind man to Dickenson, she being as handsome a woman as any in the country; a lady having asked her why she refused so many good offers for Blind Jack, she answered, "Because I could not be happy without him," and being more particularly questioned, she replied, "His actions are so singular, and his spirit so manly and enterprising, that I could not help liking him.

He now went to *Harrogate* as usual, and one day determined to pay a visit to his mother-in-law; mounting his horse, and riding up to the kitchen door, he called for a pint of wine, there being then only women in the house, they all ran up stairs in a fright; he then rode into the kitchen, through the house, and out of the hall door, no one molesting him.

He afterwards went to demand his wife's clothes, but was refused, on a second application however, he succeeded. His wife having brought him a boy, and some genteel people being the sponsors, they employed their good offices to heal the breach between the families, and were so fortunate as to succeed—On the birth of a daughter, the second child, Mrs Benson herself was god-mother, and presented Metcalf with 20 guineas.

He continued to play at *Harrogate* in the season, and set up a four wheel chaise, and a one-horse chair, for public accommodation, there having been nothing of the kind before: he kept these vehicles two summers, when the Inn-keepers beginning to run chaises, he gave them up, as he also did racing and hunting; but still wanting employment, he bought horses, and went to the coast for fish, which he took to *Leeds and Manchester*, and so indefatigable was he, that he would frequently walk

for two nights and a day with little or no rest, for as a family was coming on, he was as eager for business as he had been for diversion, still keeping up his spirits, as providence blessed him with good health.

Going from *Knaresbrough to Leeds* in a snow-storm, and crossing a brook, the ice gave way under one of his horses, and he was under the necessity of unloading to get him out; but the horse as soon as free, ran back to *Knaresbrough*, leaving him with two panniers of fish, and three other loaded horses, which together with the badness of the night, greatly perplexed him;—after much difficulty, however he divided the weight amongst the others, and pursuing his journey, arrived at *Leeds* at break of day.

Once passing through *Halifax*, he stopped at an inn, called the Broadstone: the landlord's son and some others who frequented *Harrogate*, seeing Metcalf come in, and having often heard of his exploits, signified a wish to play at cards with him; he agreed, and accordingly they sent for a pack, which he desired to examine a little, the man of the house being his friend, he could depend on his honour in preventing deception—They began and Metcalf bet four of them in turn, playing for liquor only; not satisfied with this, some of the company proposed playing for money; when engaged at shilling whist, Metcalf won 15s. the losing party then proposed to play double or quit, but Metcalf declined playing for more than half-a-guinea points; till at last yielding to much importunity, he got engaged for guineas, and favoured by fortune won 10 and a shilling for liquor each game, the whole sum, late in the possession of the loser, who took up the cards, and going out, soon returned with eight guineas more; Metcalf's friend

examined the cards to see if they were not marked, and finding all fair, they went on again, until these 8 pieces followed the other 10; they then drank freely at Metcalf's cost, he being in good circumstances to treat.—about 10 at night he took his leave saying he must be at *Knaresbrough* in the morning, having sent his horses before. On his way, he crossed the *river Wharfe, about a mile from Poole*, the water being high, his horse swam, and he got safe home; thus ended his pursuits as a fish-monger, the profits being small, and his fatigue very considerable.

From the period of his discontinuing the business of fish-monger, Metcalf continued in the practice of attending *Harrogate*, as a player on the violin, in the long room, until the commencement of the rebellion, in 1745.

The alarm which took place was general, and loyalty to the reigning sovereign and government, with measures for resistance to the rebel party, shone no where more conspicuous, than in the *County of York*.

Amongst the many instances which mark this, none were more striking than the signally gallant conduct of the late WILLIAM THORNTON, ESQ. *of Thornville Royal, near Knaresbrough*, who determined to raise a company of soldiers, at his own expence; and went to *Knaresbrough*, about the 1st of October, 1745, where he sent for *our blind hero* to his Inn, and asked him if he knew of any brave fellows, who were likely to make spirited soldiers, and having satisfied his patron on this head. he was appointed an assistant to a serjeant already procured, with orders to begin recruiting the next day.

Such was their success, that in two days only, they enlisted 140 men at 5s. each, but their allow-

ance was 1s. per day; out of whom, the captain drifted 64, the number of privates he wanted. Soon after he brought them to *Thornville-Royal*, where he ordered every other day, a *fat ox to be killed* for their entertainment, and gave them *beer seven years old*, expreasing a great pleasure at its being preserved for so good a purpose.

He now began to sound the company as to their attachment to the cause and to himself: "My lads!" says he, "you are going to form a *part of a ring fence to the finest estate in the world!* The king's army is on its march to the northward, and I have the pleasing confidence that all of you are willing to join them." They replied, as if one soul had animated them—"We will follow you to the *World's End.*

All matters being adjusted, the company was drawn up, and amongst them BLIND JACK made *no small figure*, being near 6 feet 2 inches high, and like his companions, dressed in blue and buff, with a large gold laced hat: Jack now played a march of the captain's choosing, and off they moved for *Boroughbridge*, to join General Wade's army there.

Arriving at *Newcastle*, they by order of General Wade, were united with *Pluteney's Regimeut*, which having suffered much in some late actions abroad, was thought the weakest. Captain Thornton gave orders for tents for his men, aud a marquee for himself. for which he paid the upholsterer 80 guineas; he pitched them on *Newcastle-moor*, and gave a pair of blankets to each tent. On the first night of their encampment, the snow fell six inches deep.

After stopping there for about a week, the General received intelligence of the motions of the rebels, and gave orders to march by break of day

for Hexham, in three columns, wishing to intercept them upon the *West road*, as their route seemed to be for *England* that way: the tents were instantly struck, but the *Swiss troops* having the van, and not being willing to move at so early an hour, it was half-past ten before they left the ground, and the snow by that time was become extremely deep in several places; it also proved a very severe day with hail and frost. They were often three or four hours in marching a mile, the pioneers having to lower the hills, and fill up several ditches, to make a passage for the artillery and baggage.

About 10 at night they arrived at *Ovington*, the place marked out for them, with straw to rest on; but the ground was frozen so hard that but few of the tent-pins would enter in and in those few tents which were pitched, the men lay one upon another, greatly fatigued with their march, it having been 15 hours from the time of their striking their tents, till their arrival at this place, although the distance is only 7 miles.

The next day they reached *Hexham*, where they halted; on Monday night, about 10 o'clock, the army was put into motion by a false alarm; but stopping there about three days, General Wade returned to *Newcastle*, to catch the post-road leading to *Yorkshire*, and immediately began their march for *Yorkshire*, *by way of Pierse-Bridge*, *Catterick and Boroughbridge*; and continued his route southward, encamped his men on *Clifford-moor*, where they halted a few days, and then moved to a ground between *Ferrybridge and Knotingley*. The rebels had now penetrated southward, as far as *Derby*, but the General having heard that they had received a check from the Duke of *Cumberland*, sent General Oglethorpe

with 1000 horse towards *Manchester*, either to harass the enemy in their retreat, or to join the Duke's forces; and retired himself with the remainder, by *Wakefield*, *Outwood and Leeds to Newcastle.*

In the mean time, the Duke came up with the rebels at *Clifton*, on the *borders of Westmoreland*, of which Lord George Murray, with the rear guard had taken possession, whilst another party had fortified themselves behind three hedges and a ditch.

The Duke coming upon the open moor after sun-set, gave orders for 300 dragoons to dismount, and advance to the brink of the ditch; when the rebels fired upon them from behind the hedges, which they returned, and fell a few paces back; the rebels mistaking this for flight, rushed over the ditch, but meeting a warmer reception than they expected, were glad to retreat, and continued their route to *Penrith*, and from thence to *Carlisle*, where they left part of their army.

His Royal Highness thought it advisable to reduce this place; which having surrendered, he returned to *London*. General Wade continued his march for the north, dismissing all the foreigners from his army; and General Hawley, on coming from *London* to take the command, was joined by some regiments which had been withdrawn from *Flanders*. They marched to *Edinburgh*, from thence to *Falkirk*, and pitched their tents on the north-east side of the town, on the 16th of Jan.

The Highland army being at *Torwood*, about mid-way between *Falkirk and Stirling*, and about 3 miles from the *English camp*, so that they could easily discover each others' camp-lights; the English army lay all night on their arms, in expectation of being attacked, but the van and picquet guards

came in, on the morning of the 17th, having observed no motions in the rebels' camp, which shewed any signs of attack, although they were as near as safety would permit; soon after the enemy were observed to move some of their colours from *Torwood towards Stirling*, this made the English suppose they were retreating; but this motion was a trick to deceive them; however upon this appearance, the soldiers were ordered to pile their arms and take some refreshment. and although Lord Kilmarnock was in the rebel army, General Hawley went to breakfast with Lady Kilmarnock, at *Calendar-house.*—The enemy in the mean time stole a march down a valley northward, unperceived; but just before the army discovered them, they were seen by a person who ran into the camp, exclaiming, "Gentlemen! what are you about? the highlanders will be upon you;" on which some of the officers said, "Seize that rascal, he is spreading a false alarm;—"Will you believe your own eyes?" replied the man; when immediately the truth of this assertion became apparent, by their advancing to the highest ground upon *Falkirk-moor*, the wind blowing strongly in the faces of the English, with a severe rain; at this moment several had left the field, as well as the General, but the drums beat to arms, which caused those who were absent, to repair instantly to the camp, and the lines were immediately formed.

Captain Thornton's company was embodied with the Matrosses, who were thought too weak, which was a disappointment to him, whose intention was to be in the front, whenever an engagement should take place.—Metcalf played before them to the field, but the flag-cannon sinking in a bog, Captain Thornton exclaimed, "D——n this accident, we shall see no sport to-day!" and leaving the

troop to assist the Matrosses in bringing up the cannon to their station, they then being under the command of the Captain of the train, which was a great displeasure to Captain Thornton, so he rode up opposite to the horse which was going to engage; the regiments of *Hamilton and Gardiner* were unadvisably, through some misconduct in their engagement at *Preston Pans*, put in the front; and the highlanders after firing their pieces, threw them down, and discharged their pistols in the horse's faces, which caused them to retreat much confused; and on the Duke of *Perth* exclaiming aloud, "Although the horse have given way, yet the work is not accomplished!" the enemy pursued with their broad swords, cutting down the men as they fled, and the horses did great mischief, by breaking through their own foot, the men crying out at the same time, "Dear brethren, we shall all be massacred this day!" On their passing the artillery, the Captain of the Matrosses seeing their perilous situation, gave orders for all the train horses to be cut from the cannon; General Huske at this time came up, with three regiments, and engaged the left wing of the highlanders, ordering the rear and centre to keep firing, and the front to reserve; the rebels, as was their custom, after the discharge of their pieces, threw them down, and advanced with their broad swords, close up to the first line, when the front instantly fired, and being so near, did more than double execution, which caused them to retreat, leaving a great number dead upon the spot.

The General observing a vast body of the rebels on the right, drew up his men nearer *Falkirk*, and gave orders to keep the town until morning; however on examining the powder, they had the mortification to find that the heavy rains had damaged it

to such a degree, that but few pieces could be fired; and the village being open on all sides, was a circumstance so favourable to the enemy, as induced the general to form a resolution of quitting the town with all expedition, and march to *Linlithgow*, where there was more shelter under the walls in case of an attack.—This measure was fully justified by the event; for the enemy pursued so closely, that many were taken by surprise, as in consequence or the order to keep the town all night, several had gone into the houses, to put off their wet clothes; and those who were apprised of the retreat, had no sooner left the place, than the rebels took possession, and made a great number of prisoners; amongst whom were 20 of Captain Thornton's men, with the Lieutenant and Ensign.

Mr. Crofts the lieutenant, having 80 guineas in his pocket, begged to make Lord George Murray his Treasurer; which office his lordship accepted; and had afterwards the *generosity to return him* 6.

Captain Thornton, also, was in one of the houses for the purpose before mentioned, but had not time sufficient to effect his escape; and being alarmed by the bagpipes at the door, he retreated up stairs; in a few minutes, several of the rebels rushed up, in search of the fugitives; when one of them came to the very room door behind which he had taken refuge, and overlooking him, said "Here is none of the rascals here."—The woman of the house, having seen the captain go up stairs, went to him soon after, and opening a closet door, entreated him to enter, which he did—She then brought a dresser, and placed dishes, &c. upon it, which prevented all appearance of a door in that place; and fortunately there was no bed in the room; about 10 minutes after he had been fixed in his new quarters, a great number of people, consisting

chiefly of Highland-officers, amongst whom was secretary Murray took possession of the apartment, which being large, they proposed making use of it for business, during their stay.

We will there leave Captain Thornton, and return to Metcalf, who with the Matrosses was retiring from the field of battle.

Knowing that two of his master's horses had been left at a widow's house, a short distance from the town, he made his way to the place, with intent to secure them.—This woman had in the morning, expressed great seeming loyalty to King George; but when Metcalf returned, in the evening, the wind changed, she now extolled Prince Charles, and said 'The defeat of George's folk was a just judgment.'

Metcalf went into the stable, and found the horses, saddled them, and was leading out the first, when he was surrounded by a few stragglers of the highland army; "We must have that beast," said they; but Metcalf refusing to give him up, they said one to another, "Shoot him!" On hearing two of them cock their pieces, he asked, "What do you want with him?"—They answered that they wanted him for their Prince—"If so you must have him" replied he—They took him and immediately went off. Metcalf then brought out the other, but as he was about to mount, the captains coachman, (whose name was Snowdon) joined him, and Metcalf inquired of him the fate of his master, was answered that he had not seen him since he left the artillery, when he rode up with the horse, which were going to engage; this induced him to believe that the worst had befallen him; they then thought it advisable to attempt to fall in with the rear of the army, and endeavoured to slant the ground for that

purpose, but before they had proceeded many yards their horse sunk up to the saddle skirts in a bog; however being strong, and plunging out, they mounted again, and soon joined it as they wished, where on making diligent inquiry after their captain, they were told that he was left behind; on which Snowdon returned as far as he could with safety, but without gaining any intelligence, and Metcalf walked on with the army.

They arrived at *Linlithgow*, where they halted, and the next day marched to *Edinburgh*; there the mob, and the lower orders of people, were very free in their expressions, and some of the higher also spoke very warmly in favour of Prince Charles, making it appear clearly by their own account, that nothing could prevent his coming to the crown.

The next morning, as many of Captain Thornton's men as had escaped being taken prisoners, (about 48 in number) assembled; and none of them being quite certain of having seen the captain since he left them with the cannon in the bog, they supposed him to have shared the fate of many other brave men, who had fallen in the action of that day, and which they all sincerely lamented; not only on account of the favours conferred upon them, but for the great and liberal example which he had invariably shown to his brother officers, in the care and attention which he paid to his men in general; the natural consequence of which was, that *he* possessed the love and confidence of the soldiery; the disappearance also, of the two other officers, and 20 of their men, greatly dispirited them; and together with the suspension from their regular pay, induced some of them to apply to Metcalf for a supply, in order to carry them home, but he laudably refused any aid he might have afforded them, on being informed of the purpose for which it was required.

The army being placed at *Edinburgh*, the head quarters were at the Abbey. The superior officers sent for Metcalf, thinking it a singular circumstance, that a person deprived of sight, should enter into an army; and knowing that his master was missing, they desired to converse with him; one of the officers belonging to the dragoons who retreated from *Falkirk*, speaking ironically of Thornton's men, asked Jack how he got off the field of battle?—Metcalf answered, "I found it very easy to follow, by the sound of the dragoon horses, which made such a clatter over the stones;" this reply made the gentlemen turn the laugh against him; Colonel Cockayne likewise asked how he durst venture into the service, blind as he was? to which he replied, "That had he possessed a pair of good eyes, he would never have come there, to have risked the loss of them by gunpowder;" then making his obeisance, he withdrew—for Metcalf though he had not *read books*, *had read men;* and received his knowledge from the *School of the World.*

He now determined upon a journey to *Falkirk*, in search of his captain, but this being attended with difficulty, he applied to a *Knaresbrough-man* who lived at *Edinburgh* and was of the rebel party, telling him, that he wished to be a musician to Prince Charles, as he found it was all over with the English; the man informed him, that they had a spy an Irishman, going to the Prince, on which Metcalf set forward with him, and he promised to recommend him, on their arrival at *Falkirk*, but on coming to the *English out-centries*, they were stopped—Metcalf inquired for the captain, and informed him of the real cause of his journey, by him he was kindly advised to lay aside his project, and told him that he would lose his life; but still persist-

ing, he proceeded with the spy, and arrived at *Linlithgow*, where they staid all night; they met with several women, who had been upon plunder, and were then on their return to *Edinburgh*; and the spy instructed them how to avoid the *English centries*; Metcalf was very careful to examine the clothes they had got, thinking that by chance he might meet with some of his captain's, ignorant as he was of his fate; one of the women sent a token by Metcalf to her husband, who was Lord George Murray's cook, this woman's guide was a horse-dealer, who soon became acquainted with Metcalf, having frequented the fairs in *Yorkshire*, and at this time, by some means had got introduced to the heads of both armies, and obtained a protection from each, to press horses occasionally.—This man's fate was remarkable, for going into *Stirling*, where the King's army lay, he found that orders were given to let no stranger pass without an examination, and said that *he* had a protection from General Huske; being ordered to produce it, he had the misfortune to take that out of his pocket, which he had got from the Pretender, and when informed of his mistake, instantly produced the other— but too late! for he was tied up by the neck to a lamp iron, without giving him time to put off his boots.

A short time before Metcalf and the spy left the 'change-house at *Linlithgow*, some of the van-guard of the rebels came in, and called for whiskey, and it was supposed that they dropped there a silver mounted pistol, which on their setting out, the spy picked up, and offered it to Metcalf, but *he* refused it, saying he thought it not proper to have fire-arms about him, as he expected to be searched; so they pursued their journey, and presently fell in with the *Rebel out-guard*, several of whom accosted Metcalf, and as all seemed well, they were allowed

to pass, and arrived at *Falkirk*, where he inquired for Lord George Murray's cook, to deliver his present, and was afterwards introduced to, and conversed with his Lordship, secretary Murray and other gentlemen—Lord George Murray gave him a part of a glass of wine, an article at that time of great value, for as the rebels had been there three times, and the English twice, *they had almost swept the cupboard clear of its crumbs.*

Whilst conversing with them he was very circumspect, knowing that his life was in danger, if the real cause of his journey should be discovered.

He then made his way towards the market-place, where a number of highlanders were assembled; this was on Wednesday the 22nd, but it happened that his master had left the place that morning about four hours before his arrival.

We will now return to Captain Thornton, whom we left on Friday in the closet, in close neighbourhood with the highland chiefs, who every day transacted business in the room; the quarter-masters of the rebel army having taken the house, and given the woman to whom it belonged, a small apartment backward; but every night she took care to carry him such provisions as she could convey through a crevice at the bottom of the door, and this mode she used for fear of alarming those who slept in the adjoining rooms; the closet was only a yard and a half square, and the captain's clothes being wet when he entered, made his situation the more uncomfortable, as he had got a severe cold, and sometimes could not forbear coughing, even when the rebels were in the room; once in particular, hearing a cough, they said one to another, "What is that?" but one of them answered, that it was somebody in another room; not in the least suspecting a door in the place where the closet was.

On Monday night the woman of the house went to the door, to carry him provisions as usual, when the captain said to her, "I am determined to come out, let the consequence be what it may, for I will not die like a dog in this hole;" but she begged that he would bear his confinement until the next night, and she would adopt some plan to effect his escape; she accordingly consulted an old carpenter who was true to the royal cause, and he came the next night, removed the dresser, and liberated the captain—They proceeded down stairs in the dark to the woman's apartment, where she made tea, whilst the carpenter concerted their plan of operation—They dressed him in a pladdie and brogues, with a black wig, and leaving his clothes with the woman, and all that *he* had put by, he was scarce worth one penny, and the carpenter packed him up a bag of tools, as if he was going with his master to work as soon as it was light.—The captain had only 10 guineas about him, (having left his cash with his lieutenant Mr. Crofts) eight of which he gave to the woman, who had so faithfully preserved him, and two to the carpenter, who to secret them, put them into his mouth, along with his tobacco, fearful of a search by the highlanders, who would have suspected him, had they found more than a shilling; every thing being ready, they set out, the captain with his bag of tools followed his supposed master, on coming into the crowd, he looked about and was rather behind; and although in disguise, did not look like a common workman; which making the old man dread a discovery, *he* called out to him —"*Come aiang ye filthy loon, ye have had half a bannack and a mutchkin of drink in your wame, we shall be oe'r late for our day's wark.*' Whether this artifice served him or not, is uncertain; but they got safe through the throng, and leaving the

high-road pursued their journey across the country, having come to a rising ground, the captain took a view of *Falkirk-moor*, and said, "*Yonder's the place where such a sad piece of work was made of it on Friday last.*"—The old man looking the other way, at the same time, saw 2 or 300 highlanders, who had been on plunder, coming down a lane which leads from *Calendar-house, (Lord Kilmarnock's seat)* into the main road; and being desirous of passing the end of this lane before they came up, in order to avoid them, said, "*We shall have a worse piece of work of it than we had on Friday, if we do not hasten our pace,*" and begged the captain to come forward, which he did, but walking briskly up a hill, he suddenly stopped, and said, "*I am sick;*" however they gained their point, and passing the highlanders, for had they come up with them, the least injury would have been a march back to *Falkirk, as prisoners;* on going two miles farther, they arrived at a house belonging to a friend of the carpenter's, and which had been plundered, there the old man got an egg, but not being able to find a pan to boil it, he roasted it in peat ashes, and gave it to the captain to put *in his wame*, for so he called the stomach. Proceeding a few miles further, they arrived at another house, where they procured a horse for the captain; after having arrived at the *English out-posts*, and making himself known, was permitted to pass, and reached *Edinburgh in safety.*

With respect to Metcalf, whom we left at *Falkirk*, as his dress was a plaid waistcoat, laced with gold, which he had borrowed of a friend at *Edinburgh*, together with a blue regimental coat, faced with buff, he told the highlanders, in answer to their inquiries, that he had been fiddling for the *English officers*, and that they had given him that

coat, which had belonged to a man who had been killed, and also that his intention was to serve in the same capacity with *Prince Charles*; but a person coming up, who had seen *Jack at Harrogate*, said "*That fellow ought to be taken up, for he has something more than common in his proceedings;*" on which Metcalf was taken to the guard-room, and searched for letters, but none were found having only a pack of cards in his pocket, which they split to see if they contained any writing in the folds, but finding none, he was put into a loft in the roof of the building, (where the snow came in very much) along with a dragoon and some other prisoners, where for three days they were suffered to lay in confinement.

In a short time, Metcalf and his fellow-prisoners were tried by a court-martial, at which *he* was acquitted, and *had* permission given to go to *the* prince, but wanting to borrow a clean shirt, *they* asked him *where* his own was? *he* said, at *Linlithgow*, but that *he* durst not go there, on account of *George's fellows;* they then informed him, *he* might safely go with the Irishman *he* came with; *he* knew that *his* companion *had* letters for *the highlanders' friends, at Edinburgh*, but *had* no intention to pass *the English centries*—Metcalf amused him with assurances that *he had* £10 at *Edinburgh*, for which *he* should *have* no occasion if *he* joined *the* prince, and that *he* might *have the* greatest part of it; *the* spy on *hearing* this, became very desirous of *his* company to *Edinburgh*, wishing to finger *the* money, and proposed going across the *country*, but Metcalf said *he* could pass *the English centries*, by saying *he* was going to Captain Thornton; *they then* proceeded, and after going two miles, they met an officer, *who* was reconnoitring and *he* knowing Metcalf, told *him*

his master was safe arrived at *Edinburgh*, which news was highly pleasing to him, on leaving the officer, the spy accosted him with, "So then you are going to him," "No" said Jack, "nor to any such fellows." They then passed the centry as Metcalf proposed, and arrived at *Edinburgh*, where they parted, but promised to meet again the next evening, at 9 o'clock. Jack went directly to his captain, who rejoiced at so unexpected a meeting; Metcalf told him, that he had given him a great deal of trouble, adding, that he thought people might come home from market without fetching.—The captain smiled, and said, "What is to be done, for I have neither money nor clothes, having left all behind at *Falkirk*, but I have bills upon the road, to the amount of £300." This proved fortunate, for had they been a few days sooner, they possibly might have been lost also, but the reason of this delay was, that all letters directed to *Scotland*, were at this time sent to *London*, to be examined at the *general Post-Office*. Metcalf told the captain that he could get him some money, which the other thought impossible; however he went to a known friend, and obtained £30—Tailors were immediately set to work, and next morning the captain was enabled to visit his brother officers at the abbey.

The army still quartered at *Edinburgh*, while one part of the rebels were in *Falkirk*, and another part at *Stirling*, where they raised several batteries, and besieged *Stirling Castle;* the governor, General Blakeney, made little opposition, and a shot from the batteries, killing two or three men, some of the officers were greatly enraged, and threatened to confine the governor—but a short time showed that he was right in his conduct; for letting the rebels come near the walls, on a sudden he began so hot a fire, as to kill a number of their men,

demolishing all their batteries, and dismounting their guns, which made them glad to retreat; and raise the siege; and the general having destroyed the bridge, they were obliged to make a circuitous march, before they were able to ford the river.

The *Duke of Cumberland* arrived at *Edinburgh* on the 30th of January, 1746, and two days afterwards, marched at the head of the army, towards *Falkirk*, the rebels leaving it a little time before; Captain Thornton visited the Duke often; his Royal Highness took notice of Metcalf, and spoke to him several times on the march, observing how well by the sound of the drum, he was able to keep his pace. On the army's arrival at *Linlithgow*, intelligence was received that the rebels were on their march to give them battle, upon which the army was drawn up in order, and the Duke rode through the lines, and addressed the men, as follows:—"If there be any, who think themselves in a bad cause, or are afraid to engage, thinking they may fight against any of their relations, let them now turn out, receive pardon and go about their business without any further question."—On this, the whole army gave three huzzas; but the intelligence proving false, they proceeded to *Falkirk*, and continued their route through *Stirling*, *Perth*, *Montrose*, *Briffin*, *and Stonehive to Aberdeen*, where they halted—the rebel army now lay at *Strathbogie*.

At *Aberdeen* the Duke gave a ball to the ladies, and personally solicited Captain Thornton for his fiddler; there being at that time no music in the army, except Colonel Howard's, (the Old Buffs) which was wind music, and the performers, who were *Germans*, were unaccustomed to country dances; as the rebel army was only 20 miles distant, no invitations were sent till 5 o'clock, though the ball was to begin at 6, twenty-five couple danced for eight hours, and his Royal Highness made one

of the party, and several times as he passed Metcalf who stood on a chair to play, shouted, "Thornton play up ;" but Jack needed no exhortation, for he was very well practised, and better inclined.

Next morning the Duke sent him two guineas, but as he was not permitted to take money, he informed his captain, who said as it was the Duke's money, he might take it; but observed that he should give his royal highness' servants a treat.—He had only three servants with him, (viz. his gentleman, cook, and groom,) So the next night two of them paid Metcalf a visit, and a merry party they made, the captain ordering them great plenty of liquor.

In a little time they proceeded on their march, and engaged the rebels on *Culloden-moor*, giving them a total defeat, although they had targets to ward off the bayonet, whilst they cut away with their broad swords, yet the duke found a method of frustrating their plan, by pushing the bayonet over the right arm, which rendered their targets of no use; Kingston's light horse pursued them in their disorder and flight, and made great slaughter amongst them.

The English prisoners were now all liberated; two or three of captain Thornton's men had died in prison, and the rest returned home.

The rebellion being completely suppressed, captain Thornton returned home also, accompanied by Metcalf, of whose family it is full time to take some notice.—He had the happiness to find his faithful partner, and children in good health.

Blind Jack being now at liberty to choose his occupation, attended *Harrogate* as usual; but having in the course of his scotch expedition, become acquainted with the various articles, manufactured in that country, and judging that some of those

might answer him to traffic with in *England*, he repaired in the spring to *Scotland*, and supplied himself with various articles in the cotton and worsted way, particularly *Aberdeen stockings;* for all those articles he found a ready sale, at the houses of gentlemen, in the extensive *County of York;* and being personally known to most of the families, was ever very kindly received. He never was at a loss to know among 1000 articles, what each had cost him, from a particular mode of marking.

It was also customary with him to buy horses for sale in *Scotland*, bringing back galloways in return; and in this traffic he depended on feeling the animals, to direct his choice.

He also engaged pretty deeply in contraband trade, the profits of which, at that time, were much more considerable than the risk.

Once in particular, having received a pressing letter from *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, requiring his speedy attendance, he set out on horse-back from *Knaresbrough* at three in the morning, and got into *Newcastle* in the evening, about six o'clock, the distance nearly 74 miles, and did not feel the least fatigued.

Having received some packages, he employed a few soldiers to convey them to a carrier, judging that men of their description were least liable to suspicion; after sending off his goods, he staid two nights with some relations he had there, and then set out for home; he had with him about a hundred weight of tea, cased over with tow, and tightly corded up; this he put into a wallet, which he laid across the saddle.

Coming to *Chester-le-street*, *(about half way between Newcastle and Durham,)* he met at the inn, an exciseman, who knew him as soon as he had dismounted, and asked him what he had got there? Metcalf answered, "It is some tow and line for my

aunt, who lives a few miles distant—I wish she was far enough for giving me the trouble to fetch it."—The officer said to him, "Bring it in;" he replied. "For the time I shall stay, it may as well remain on the horsing-stone."—By this seeming indifference about his package, he removed suspicion from the mind of the exciseman, who assisted in replacing it across the saddle, when he pursued his journey and got home in safety,

Once having disposed of a string of horses, he bought with the produce, a quantity of rum, brandy and tea, to the amount of £200, put them on board a vessel for *Leith*, and travelled overland on foot, to meet the vessel there; he had about 30 miles to walk, and carried near five stone weight of goods, which he did not choose to put on shipboard. At *Leith*, he had the mortification to wait six weeks, without receiving any tidings of the vessel, which many supposed to have been lost, there having been a storm in the interval. The distress of mind resulting from this, induced him to say, "*If she is lost, I wish I had been in her, for she had all my property on board!*" Soon after, however, the ship got into *Leith harbour;* he there went on board, and set sail for *Newcastle*, but another storm arising, the mate was washed overboard, the mainsail carried away, and the ship driven near the coast of *Norway;* despair now became general--the prospect of going to the bottom seemed almost certain.—He now reflected on the impiety of his wish respecting the former storm, and so effectually was his way of thinking changed, that had he had all the current coin in the universe, he would have given it to have been on shore; it now appeared to him a dreadful thing to leave the world in the midst of health and vigour; but the wind changing, hope began to return, and the captain put about for the

Scotch coast, intending to make *Arbrotic.*—A signal of distress was put up, but the sea ran so high that no boat could venture out with a pilot. He then stood in for the harbour, but struck against the pier-end owing to the unmanageable state of the vessel, from the loss of her main sail; she narrowly escaped being bulged, but having got to the back of the pier, was towed round into the harbour, with near five feet of water in her hold; her escape from the merciless elements however, did not seem to terminate her dangers; the country people showed a disposition to seize her as a wreck and plunder her; but fortunately there was at hand, a party consisting of an officer and twenty men, of Pluteney's regiment, who had been in pursuit of some smugglers, and Metcalf knowing them well, (Colonel Thornton's company being attached to that regiment) the officer sent three files of men to protect the vessel, while the crew were removing the goods to a warehouse.

As this vessel stood in need of repairs, Metcalf put his goods on board another, and in her got to *Newcastle;* there he met with an acquaintance, and from the seeming cordiality of the meeting, he thought he might have trusted his life in the hands of this man; with this impression, Metcalf opened to him the state of his affairs, informing him, that he had got 400 gallons of gin and brandy, for which he had a permit, and about 30 gallons for which he had none, and which he wanted to land, telling him at the same time, of the harassing voyage he had just finished; but it seems his misfortunes were only about to commence, for in a quarter of an hour, he found that the man, whom he had taken for a friend, had gone down the quay side, and giving information of what he knew, had all the goods seized, and brought on shore; Metcalf imagined that none were seizable, but the small part

for which he had not obtained a permit; but was soon undeceived, the whole being liable to seizure, as not agreeing with the specified quantity.

He then repaired to the custom-house, and applied to Mr. Sunderland, the collector—This gentleman knew Metcalf, (being in the habit of visiting *Harrogate*) and received him very kindly; but informed him, with much concern, that it was not in his power to serve him, the captors being the excise people, and not of his department—He however suggested, that some good might result from an application to Alderman Peireth, with whom Metcalf was acquainted, and who was particularly intimate with the collector of the excise; the good alderman gave him a letter to the collector, representing (as instructed by Metcalf) that the bearer had bought 400 gallons of spirits at the *Custom-house, at Aberdeen;* and that the extra quantity was for the purpose of treating the sailors, and other friends, as well as for sea-stock for himself.—At first the collector told him that nothing could be done for him, until he should write up to the board, and receive an answer; but Metcalf remonstrating on the inconvenience of the delay, and the other re-considering the letter, he agreed to come down to the quay, at four o'clock in the afternoon, which he accordingly did, and released every thing without any expense.*

A short time after the regiment called "The

* About this time, Metcalf was accosted, on the highway, near Darlington, by a well known voice, inquiring what road he was going, and where he had been.—To which he answered, "I have been in Scotland, where I was before, with Colonel Thornton, at Falkirk races, but now I have been drinking whiskey amongst the red-shanks, and doing a little business in the smuggling line—but pray how does all friends at Knaresbrough?" surprised by the question, the person replied, "Why Jack, do you know me?' after a short pause, John replied, "It is Mr. Thomas Cass the glazier of Knaresbrough.'

Queen's bays" were raised, they were quartered at *Knaresbrough,* and the adjacent towns; but after a short stay, they were ordered to the north; the country people seemed very unwilling ro supply carriages for the conveyance of the baggage, the King's allowance being but nine-pence a mile, per ton; that of the county, one shilling in the west-riding, and fifteen-pence in the north-riding,—Metcalf having two waggons, (one of them covered) was desirous to try this new business; and to make sure of the job, got the soldiers to press his 2 carriages, which were accordingly loaded, himself attending them to *Durham*; previons to loading, however, the country people, who knew the advantage of carrying for the army, and who had kept back, in hopes of an advance in the price, came forward with their waggons in opposition to Metcalf, but the soldiers would have no other.

Arriving at *Durham*, he met Bland's dragoons on their march from the *north to York;* they loaded his waggons again for *Northallerton*, and would willingly have engaged them to *York*, but this he was obliged to decline, having promised to bring 23 wool-packs to *Knaresbrough;* he was just six days in performing this journey, and cleared with eight horses, and the one he rode, no less a snm than £20, though many people were afraid to travel with soldiers.

Some time after the Queen's regiment had got to *Durham*, it received the annual recruit of 4 horses to a troop.—The regiment having been so lately raised, had no old horses; nevertheless, four were to be sold from each.—Metcalf had notice sent him of the sale, but did not receive the letter until the day before it commenced.—He set off, however, that afternoon for *Durham*, and riding all night, got there by day-break.

His first business was to become acquainted with

the Farriers; he therefore got about half a dozen of them together, and plying them well with gin, he began to question them, respecting the horses which were to be sold.

Amongst the number to be disposed of, was a grey one belonging to one of the drums; the man who had the charge of him, not having been sufficiently careful in trimming him, had burnt him severely, which caused a prodigious swelling; had his careless conduct been known to his superiors, he would have been punished for it, upon that account the matter was hushed up—Metcalf however, being apprised of the real cause, in the course of his conversation with the farriers, determined to purchase him, judging that they would be desirous to part with him at any price, and in this conjecture he was not mistaken.

The sale began by bringing out seven bay horses, six of which, a gentleman bought for a carriage, and Metcalf purchased the seventh.

In the year 1754, Metcalf commenced a new employ.—He set up a stage waggon between *York and Knaresbrough*, being the first on that road, and conducted it constantly himself, twice a week in the summer season, and once in the winter, and this business, together with the occasional conveyance of army baggage, employed his attention, until his first contracting for the making of roads, which suiting him better, he disposed of his draught and interest in the road, to one Guiseley.

An *Act of Parliament* having been obtained, to make a *turnpike-road, from Harrogate to Boroughbridge*, a person of the name of Ostler, of *Farnham, two miles from Knaresbrough*, a man of great ability, and who had great confidence placed in him, was appointed surveyor; Metcalf being in company with him, agreed to make about three miles of it, viz. *between Minskip and*

Ferrensby. The materials were to be procured from one gravel pit, for the whole length, he therefore provided deal boards, and erected a temporary house at the pit, took 12 horses to the place, fixed racks and mangers, and hired a house for his men at *Minskip*, which was distant about three-quarters of a mile; he often walked from *Knaresbrough* in the morning, with four or five stone weight of meat on his shoulders, and joined his men by six o'clock, and by the means he used, completed the work much sooner than was expected, to the entire satisfaction of the surveyor and trustees.

During his leisure hours, he studied measurement, in a way of his own, and when certain of the girt and length of any piece of timber, he was able to reduce its true contents to feet and inches, and would bring the dimensions of any building into yards and feet.

About the time this road was finished, the building of a bridge was advertised to be contracted for at *Boroughbridge;* and a number of gentlemen met for that purpose, at the *Crown Inn* there.—Metcalf amongst others, went also. The masons varied considerably in their estimates.—Ostler the surveyor of roads, was appointed to survey the bridge, and Metcalf told him that he wished to undertake it, though he had naver done any thing of the kind before.

On this, the surveyor acquainted the gentlemen with what Metcalf proposed, when he was sent for, and asked what he knew about a bridge; he told them that he could readily describe it, if they would take the trouble of writing down his plan, which was as follows:—"The span of the arch 18 feet, being a semi-circle, makes 27; the arch stones must be a foot deep, which if multiplied by 27, will be 486; and the basis will be 72 feet more.—This for the arch, it will require good backing; for this purpose,

there are proper stones in the *old Roman wall, at Aldbrough*, which may be brought if you please to give directions to that effect." The gentlemen were surprised at his readiness, and agreed with him for building the bridge. The persons who had given in their estimates, were much offended, and as the stone was to be procured from *Renton*, a sale quarry, belonging to one of the masons who was there, he was unwilling to sell any to Metcalf, upon which he went to *Farnham*, and found good stones which the lime burners had left, (being too strong for their purpose) got them dressed at the place for little money, conveyed them to *Boroughbridge*, and having men to take them off the carriages, set them, and completed the arch in one day; and finished the whole in a very short period.

Soon after, there was a *mile and a half of turnpike road to be made, between Knaresbrough-bridge and Harrogate*, for which Metcalf also agreed. Going one day over a place covered with grass, he told his men that he thought it different from the ground adjoining, and would have them try for stone or gravel, which they immediateiy did, and found *an old causeway, supposed to have been made in the time of the Romans*, which afforded many materials proper for the purpose of making the road: between the *Forest-lane-head, and Knaresbrough-bridge*, there was a bog, in a low piece of ground, over which to have passed was the nearest way, and the surveyor thought it impossible to make a road over it; but Metcalf assured him he could readily accomplish it.—The other then told him, that if so, he should be paid for the same length as if he had gone round: Jack set about it, cast the road up, and covered it with whin and ling, and made it as good or better, than any part he had undertaken. He received about £400 for the road, and a small bridge which he had built over a brook called *Star-beck*.

He afterwards contracted for *making five miles and a quarter of road, between Harrogate and Harewood-bridge*, and received for it £1200.

For a mile and a half, through part of Chapel-Town to Leeds, and received for that and lengthening *the arch of Sheepscar-bridge*, nearly £400.

Four miles of road between Skipton and Colne, and two miles on the Burnley-road.

Two miles of road through *Broughton to Marton, and two miles more through Addingham, and over part of Romelies-moor*, for all which he received £1350.

Four miles between *Mill-bridge and Halifax*, and five miles between *Wakefield and Chickingley-beck, near Dewsbury;* and received for the same £1200,

Three miles and a half, between *Hag-bridge and Pontefract;* and one mile and a half *on the Doncaster-road, from Crafton, through Foldby, the road from Wakefield to Pontefract, Doncaster and Halifax, being under the management of one company of trustees, he received from those gentlemen*, £6400.

From *Blackmoor-foot to Marsden*, and from thence to *Standish-foot; also from Lupset-gate through Horbury;* and also, *three miles from Standish to Thurton Clough; from Sir John Kaye's seat to Huddersfield, and thence to Longroyd-bridge toll-bar; in the course of which were several bridges*, the whole about 21 miles, for which he received £4500.

In the building of bridges, where the foundations were bad, he laid on a sufficient thickness of ling, (where it could be got) otherwise straw, he next laid planks five inches thick, with square mortices cut through, and driving in a number of piles, made the foundations secure—He then laid springs for the arches upon the planks, which caused all to

settle regularly when the weight came on; and though he built many arches of various sizes, none ever fell; he also took houses to build, amongst which was one belonging to Mr. Marmaduke Hebden, near *Huddersfield*, 9 yards wide, 23 long, and 7 from the foundation to the square of the building, with 20 chimneys.

Between *Chapel-le-Frith and Macclesfield*, 8 miles; between *Huddersfield and Wakefield*, 10 miles, for which he received £2500.

From *Huddersfield to High-moor*, in the road to *Manchester*, including a bridge at *Marsden*, of 12 yards-span, in all 10 miles, he received £3500.

From *Docklane-head to Ashton-under-line*, and part of the road from *Ashton to Stockport*; part of the road from *Stockport to Mortram-Longdale*, about 16 miles, for which he received £3200.

From *Randal-Calbred*, in the road from *Chapel-le-Frith to Macclesfield*, including several bridges, for which he received £2000.

From *Congleton* to the *Red-Bull*, on the edge of *Staffordshire*, including drains, arches, walls, &c. 6 miles, for which he received £3500.

For Sir G. Warren, at *Poynton*, in *Cheshire*, about 5 miles of road in his own park, and draining a large quantity of land, £1000.

Four miles of road between *Whaley* and *Buxton*, for which he received £2500.

Two miles over the *High-flat* near *Pennystone*, in the road between *Huddersfield and Sheffield*, £340.

For eight miles of road between *Huddersfield and Halifax*, £2700.

From *Bury to Blackburn*, in *Lancashire*, and another branch from the said road to *Ackrington*, the work of two summers, £3500.

For part of the road between *Knaresbrough and Wetherby*, £600.

For that part of the road which leads through *Ribston and Kirk-Deighton*, till it joins the great north road, leading from *Boroughbridge to Wetherby*, and building two toll-houses, about £380.

About the year 1781, Metcalf hearing how beneficial the cotton business was to all who were engaged in it, resolved to have a share in that also, he accordingly purchased utensils proper for the purpose, with looms and other implements for weaving calicoes, jeans and velverets. Having got his calicoes whitened and printed, his velverets cut, dyed, &c. and had spun up all his cotton, he brought about 800 yards of finished goods, and disposed of them in *Knaresbrough* and the neighbourhood.

In 1789, he contracted for making several pieces of road in *Lancashire*, between *Bury and Heslington*, and another part from *Heslington to Ackrington ;* also a branch from that to *Blackburn*, the work of two summers, for that he received £3500.

In the year 1791, he returned into *Yorkshire*, and began to speculate in buying and selling hay, measuring the stacks with his arms, and having learnt the height, he could soon tell the number of square yards contained in the whole.

He sometimes bought wood standing, and having got the girt and height, would in a way peculiar to himself, calculate the solid contents.

From his leaving *Lancashire*, in the year 1792, he settled on a small farm at *Spofford*, four miles from *Knaresbrough*, where he lived with his daughter, in which retirement this extraordinary man finished his life, April 26th, 1810, in the 93rd year of his age.

His descendants were then 4 children, 20 grandchildren, and 90 great and great grand-children.

FROM W. LANGDALE'S OFFICE, KNARESBROUGH.

OF WHOM MAY BE HAD,

THE

History of Knaresbrough,

With HARROGATE and its Medicinal Springs; including an Account of the most Remarkable Places in the Neighbourhood, &c. Seventh Edition, with Plates, and a Map of the Country 20 Miles round, Price 5s. Boards.

A WEEK AT HARROGATE,

A POEM.

The Original and the only Authentic Account of the

Trial of Eugene Aram,

(Late a Schoolmaster at Knaresbrough,) for the Murder of Daniel Clark; with his Autobiography, and a particular Account of his Studies, and Literary Attainments; also, several of his Letters, and Poems; and his Plan and Specimens of an Anglo-Celtic Lexicon.

THE YORKSHIRE

Poet's Walk through Knaresbrough

And its Vicinity. By John Nicholson.

THE HISTORY

And Prophecies of Mother Shipton,

PRICE 6d.